

THE LABOUR ORGANISER

No. 175

JANUARY, 1936

Price 4d.

MONTH BY MONTH

NINETEEN THIRTY-SIX We found it not so easy to greet the New Year this time as when hopes of early Socialist victory made each New Year a stage along the march. Which just shows that even the optimist of the "Labour Organiser" still chafes at the thought of another four years of Tory rule before the issue can be tested again. The next four years of capitalist control—the control of dying and desperate capitalism—may open a new chapter in history, while the blunders and the bloodiness of those who believe in war may land us in one long before it is time for a frightened and awakened nation to draw back. The outlook therefore for the New Year was not cheery. We take comfort in the thought that there are ways and means of educating public opinion, and of making that opinion felt long before the election, and this is a problem to which organisers of the Labour Party may have more particularly to apply themselves in the early future.

RECRUITS WANTED. What is abundantly evident is that Labour stands in need of a great recruitment, and that the membership roll of the Party needs to be vastly increased if the ground gained at the recent election is to be held, and a further advance made. It all depends upon whether the Movement sees the position and unitedly seeks to remedy it. It is not generally appreciated that Labour Party affiliated membership has fallen in fifteen years (the peak year was 1920) from 4,359,807 to 1,897,231. All our readers of course know the exceptional reasons for this drop, but even allowing for them all the decrease spells a definite weakening of Labour's direct attachment and appeal to hundreds of thousands of electors. Individual

membership is woefully far from making up the discrepancy. If we put individual membership at half-a-million there is still a loss of nearly two million as compared with the peak year. Recruitment therefore, is necessary, not only in individual membership, but in affiliated membership, and we would like this aspect of the question to impress itself upon the leaders of the Movement, and to find application in a campaign with both objectives in view.

TORY CARS. Our article last month having reference to the number of Tory cars in use at the election aroused a good deal of interest and comment. We have received approval of the views we expressed from many quarters. At the same time, we regret to notice that certain Labour folk are calling for the same remedy which was proposed by the Labour Government (and we believe later abandoned in principle) i.e., legislation to place all cars under the control of returning officers. We do not believe there is the slightest possibility of the Tories agreeing to this sort of legislation, and we do not believe that the proposal contains a solution of our difficulties. Indeed, although we are opposed to the use of cars entirely, we should prefer the Tory proposal for a limitation of numbers based on electorates, and to face the next election with whatever limitation had been agreed upon. The circumstances of the next election may be a tremendous aggravation on that of the recent election, and we cannot believe that in the face of a strong public demand the Tories would be so foolish as to leave the matter over to the next Parliament without attempting to do something which would reserve themselves at any rate, a substantial portion of the advantage they now enjoy. As to the pro-

posal again mooted by some Labour speakers, not only would there be no likelihood of the Tories adopting same, but if a Labour Government adopted it the objections to the plan would still remain. What matters that a fleet of cars was under the control of the returning officer if the drivers were all Tories, and what tricks could even a "controlled" driver play upon a car

load of opponents, if he were so pleased? And why should the returning officer have such a disagreeable duty forced upon him? Far better in our propaganda on this matter to wholeheartedly advocate the entire abolition of the use of cars, and then, if we are forced, to accept such mercies as we may pending the success of our own plan.

NEWS. NOTES. NOTIONS

The Newburn District Local Party (Wansbeck Division) have issued an agenda and report for the Annual Meeting, which takes place on 18th inst., which is a model for other Local Parties. The report itself is a record of a really satisfactory year's work, and it indicates an increase in membership, in income and in funds. The report, which is printed, contains, among other useful and necessary information, a list of nominations for offices, and of resolutions, the number of which indicates local interest. The agenda is fatter than many menus prepared for large and important Divisional Conferences.

The Wrekin Divisional Labour Party was not fortunate in winning back the seat for Labour at the General Election—that however, will come—and meanwhile we can congratulate the Party on an efficiently fought contest. We have been particularly interested in the manner in which the records of the election have been preserved by the Divisional Secretary, who acted as Election Agent. One of the most distressing evidences of the casualness of some Labour folk, is the fact that again and again elections will be fought and important information lost. The data collected by Mr. Hogan is worth fifty pounds of anybody's money at another election.

Perhaps the majority of election agents (but not all) will think of preserving the names of helpers during the election; Wrekin has gone much further than this, and in a specially prepared book there is a doomsday that will prove invaluable. The future agent will be able to study the results

of the past elections for some years, together with their cost and similar comparisons. Of the late election he will find a collection of press cuttings; complete lists of meetings; copies of all circulars of literature; lists of speakers and other workers; car lenders: committee rooms, halls and schools, etc., each with appropriate detail. And last but not least, will be found a copy of the Candidate's report on the election. It is impossible in this brief summary to enumerate each item of information that has been collected. Perhaps it will suffice to say that we have rarely seen the matter so well done as it has here been.

The Doncaster D.L.P., agent Mr. Herbert F. Heavyside, has issued a useful little Year Book for 1936. This publication is only of pocket size, but it gives in handy form a wealth of information regarding the personnel of the local Movement, and of its public men and women. A booklet of this kind has a distinct organising value. Members often desire to know—they ought to know, and they are entitled to know—the people who really run the Party. Extend this information and let the rank and file know who's who, and a great advertisement for the Party is secured. We also imagine that some people take a pride in seeing their names registered in a printed Party record. And why not?

The Yorkshire District of the Agents' Union took an evening off on the 11th inst., when a dinner and social evening (din and dinner the programme said) was held at the Hotel Metropole, Leeds. The Chairman of the Agents' Union, Mr. F. Constantine, of Clitheroe, and

the General Secretary, Mr. H. Drinkwater, attended as guests. A really pleasant evening was spent by all concerned, and Labour agents and their wives showed that they could organise something besides Local Parties and Elections. The proceedings were presided over by Ald. A. Gardiner, of Huddersfield. Credit is due to Coun. G. Brett and Mr. Reg. Wallis, both of Leeds, for the arrangements made. Incidentally, it was not a little disconcerting to the General Secretary to find the "100 per cent. Efficiency" and "100 per cent. Organisation" of the Agents' Union had been amended on the programme to "100 per cent. Harmony" and "100 per cent. Hilarity." One wonders if our Yorkshire comrades appreciate that our Union is now marching on to the 200 per cent. mark! We are not certain yet about getting there.

The Darlington Labour Party, who increased their vote at the election by 2,400, are by no means disheartened at the result, and are pressing on with increased energy in organisation. In a circular just issued to members, the Secretary, Mr. T. W. Foster, says, "You will be interested to know that we have a normal expenditure of between three and four pounds per week, even though we are paying no wages, and that this expenditure is necessary for literature, stationery, postage, publicity, public meetings, room rents, and miscellaneous items all of which, I think you will agree, are absolutely necessary to the life of our Party."

LONDON CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD.

POLITICAL COMMITTEE

A Political Organiser

(either sex)

is required by the above to undertake organising work in the London area in all phases of the Committee's activities

Salary - £300 per annum.

A knowledge of the Co-operative Movement is essential. Apply, stating age and qualifications, and enclose two references in envelope endorsed "Organiser" not later than 24th February, 1936, to:—

Political Secretary,
16 Northumberland Avenue,
London, W.C.2.

CHILDREN VOTING

A Prosecution

At Newport, Mon., on the 29th November, a defendant was summoned for having given false information on the prescribed form, requiring information from householders, contrary to the Representation of the People Act, 1918, First Schedule, Rule 35. The case for the prosecution was that the name of a boy, aged seven years, had appeared on the voters' list, and his grandfather had taken him to the polling booth and had insisted on the boy recording his vote. The defence was that the boy's name had been inserted through carelessness, as the defendant did not read the directions, and thought that the names of the persons residing in the house had to be inserted. The first he knew of the boy voting was when he returned home in the evening. The grandfather had realised his foolishness, and wished to be prosecuted instead of the defendant. The bench accepted the explanation, and the chairman, Mrs. Lucian J. Brown, stated that the defendant would be required to pay the costs, viz., £3. It transpired that a photograph of the grandfather and the boy had appeared in a newspaper. Every person registered is entitled to vote, under section 8 (1). There is no maximum age for voters, although jury service (which depends on the voters' list) ceases at the age of 60, under the Juries Act, 1825, section 1.

(From "Justice of the Peace.")

After the Election

Win or lose get down
to that

MONTHLY NEWS SHEET

Special lines in 4 or 8
page size

Ripley Printing Society
Ltd.

RIPLEY, Derbyshire

Phone 106

ELECTION LITERATURE

COMMENTS KIND AND CAUSTIC

Election literature steadily improves. Business men and advertising experts learnt long ago that printed appeals to the public must be made in a form to please that public; that the world was surfeit with printed matter, and that if yours was to be read it must be something out of the ordinary. How to get out of the rut has been a problem to which capitalist copywriters have applied themselves for a very long time, and the fact that millions of pounds are spent in advertising each year indicates that after all business men are satisfied that the public can be, and are, made to read that which is written for them in advertisements. These facts are important.

Election literature, we repeat, steadily improves. Few election agents have learnt their lesson scientifically like the business copywriter, but gradually, we suppose, the point has got home that election literature in the bulk was stodgy rubbish which only the excitement of the election caused people to read. The smart election agent has at last realised that if he can get people to read *his* literature for preference, his candidate will stand a better chance. There is a lot more to be learnt along this line before we get all the improvement which is desirable.

However, it is questionable whether mural literature showed the same improvement as other stuff. Despite the great pre-election Government posters, one is tempted to say that the political poster is on the wane. Certainly, it is by no means so effective in its appeal as at one time. The Government prosperity posters were simple and effective in outlay, and achieved their purpose mainly because of their forthrightness and readability, plus a "damnable reiteration" which must have cost a mint of money. That campaign was an exception, and is rather outside the scope of our observations. Election posters in general were not up to standard, and certainly no. Millais has been tempted to enter for this work.

Pictorial posters seem to have given way to photo reproductions of the candidates. We suppose nobody will claim that this is a gain for Art, it is certainly no gain in effectiveness. Greek gods do not enter the lists as British Parliamentary candidates, and the ladies and gentlemen who do cannot as a body be said to have faces half so pleasing as those which artists would picture for us if they had the chance. There is a limit even to the photographer's untruthfulness; and in the interests of Truth, Art, and the Scapa Society we do not wish well to those printers who make a speciality of poster photography and tempt innocent agents to order that which is often their candidate's undoing!

A variety of factors contribute to the decay of the election poster. Chief of them is expense, and perhaps the day will come when the radical proposal of the "Labour Organiser" to prohibit election posters (except the posting of an address to the electors) may be acceptable to all Parties. The editor of the "Labour Organiser" in making that proposal a few years ago took his stand on the plea that the poster was essentially an appeal to impulse and not to reason, and that its abolition would inflict no hardship, while tending to cheapen costs. Old-fashioned election agents always held that it was necessary to "make a good show," and they expended quite a lot of money in doing so, cancelling one another out. Although a "show" is still important to-day, the modern election agent prefers to endeavour to get it through the medium of his canvass and contacts; window cards and a show of Party favours are far surer indications of support than many posters on the hoardings—and cheaper.

There are other orthodoxies, the death of which we would like to see, whose time is not yet. The poll card flourishes like the green bay tree, and nine out of ten poll cards are unattractive paste-boards that offend our æsthetic tastes. But the public won't do



PUBLIC ADDRESS
the most
POWERFUL ARGUMENT

AT ALL MEETINGS

150 EQUIPMENTS

HIRE
 PURCHASE
 TERMS
 ARRANGED

already in use by

**LABOUR PARTIES
 & CO-OP. SOCIETIES**

BE READY for the General Election
with

**F.I. MICROPHONES
 & LOUD SPEAKERS**

FILM INDUSTRIES LTD.

Head Office: 60 Paddington St., W.I.
 Phone: Welbeck 2293/4

Scottish Office: 122 Bothwell St., Glasgow

without them, and until election agents of different Parties can agree either to abolish them or to publish a joint card, the evil must persist. Why electors must be told by each candidate where and how to vote passes comprehension. The election address is another orthodoxy whose demise is long overdue. It is rumoured that one candidate had a Cross of Calvary on his address — a thoughtful man this, and reminds us of the many crosses called election addresses that now lie upon our table. Some candidates had the originality to print the election address in their News Sheet. It paid.

Overdone duplicating seems to be a fault peculiar to Labour campaigns. There are some people who really ought not to be trusted with a duplicator, for they cannot resist the temptation to run off all sorts of matter upon it. Now there is one use to which we commend the duplicator, and for which it has no rival. That is in the reproduction of semi-personal letters to the electors. That is the true use of the duplicator. It is an abuse of the appliance to run off upon it general announcements to the electors, except in case of great emergency. The duplicator is utterly unsuited to reproduce handbills and similar announcements, however skilful the operator may be in his drawings and lettering. In this use the duplicator cannot equal printing, and as we have again and again pointed out the sensible Organiser wants everything he issues to have the maximum appeal. The appeal of a duplicated handbill is not ten per cent. of a well-printed production, nor is it much cheaper. The printed production has variety of type, of paper and readability, all on its side, and these things tell most. We equally complain of those who, having appropriate matter to duplicate, issue too much of it, and who do not avail themselves of the variety possible by sensible changes with tinted papers and inks.

The enemy, too, makes mistakes. As a whole Tory printing is below the Labour standard. A common fault with Tory agents is to indulge in two colour printing when the same is quite unnecessary, and hardly adds to the effectiveness of the production. Tory agents also appear to be addicted to the use of poor paper. Readers of these columns will appreciate that the

"L.O." advocates *good* printing, i.e., printing which is a combination of the best and most suitable both in workmanship and quality of material. We have some samples of election printing before us which indicate that some Labour election agents have fallen into Tory errors. The cause of these mistakes usually lies in "encouraging" local printers, because they are local, and not because they are the best. The agent finds out too often that in the eyes of the Trade Unions concerned such printing shops are under a ban. Usually, one evil follows another, and one finds that the equipment of non-Union shops is often the root cause of bad work. One cannot get the best out of old types and rickety machines worked by boys.

Though this journal has contained in the past many hints on the selection of photo-blocks one still sees bad work issued to the electors as a result of a bad combination of block and paper. When will election agents learn that it is worth while scrapping old blocks and submitting to their blockmaker a sample of paper on which the job will be done? There is no such thing as a half-tone block made of a screen suitable for reproduction on any class of paper, and stinginess in blocks is false economy. In some cases we are certain that the printer is to blame either for failing to give proper advice, or, when entrusted with the order for a block, for procuring the wrong screen. Our advice is always to deal with the blockmaker direct. We also have samples before us which indicate that some election agents issue illustrations made from different photographs of their candidate. This is a mistake.

Labour election literature in many quarters showed a regrettable jumpiness and fear of some last-minute stunt on the part of our opponents. In this election we believe that the prosperity stunt had done the trick before ever the election started. A last-minute election lie would have been a superfluity. We are all for warning the electors of Tory tactics, but we do not think it is policy to issue printed exhortations urging the electors to look out for some last-minute story by the enemy. It rather looks as if a guilty conscience was at work, and it tends to advertise the enemy, and to direct the eyes of the electors to Tory Com-

mittee Rooms during the last hours of the contest instead of to our own.

Deritend. Samples which have reached us are very smart. A full-length cut-out of Fred Longden in speaking attitude savours originality; some would say also of illegality, though we think it perfectly sound. The election address here was an original piece of work.

Bristol East. Sir Stafford Cripps's literature was nearly all of front-rank effectiveness, and it certainly had a kick in it. The poll card too was unusual and pulling. We have seen an admirable analytical report on the election organisation which was prepared by Mr. H. E. Rogers, the election agent.

West Bromwich. One always looks to West Bromwich, and to Mr. F. O. Roberts and his agent, Mr. Albert Guest, to excel in election literature, and we were not disappointed. The typographical art was well displayed in everything issued by the Labour candidate. The election address was a model of brevity as its production was a model of originality and good work.

West Fulham. A budget of varied, and variegated election literature reaches us from Mr. W. R. Banner. Here the electors would not be confused as they sometimes are by the issue of two leaflets or other matter in similar form. There is an attractiveness about the lot.

Northampton. One or two very exceptional items of matter were put out here. An illustrated leaflet entitled "Think and Vote Labour" was exceptionally good. Apparently lithographed.

King's Norton. Mr. J. T. Baxter, the Agent at King's Norton generally has ideas. This is a Division which looks for quality, and is not too keen on the orthodoxies. They should have been satisfied under both heads. We note that the Business-Reply card (licensed No. 20500) was put into use here in inviting offers of help during the election.

Stockport. Congratulations to Mr. H. Oldham, the election agent, and thanks, too, for some useful samples of

literature. The Election Special was particularly bright, and illustrated more liberally than most.

Royton. Quite a lot of originality was displayed in the election literature here. The electors did not respond to the slogan "Make Leonard Oakes M.P." but that was not the fault of the literature.

Hartlepool. A budget of Municipal and General Election literature reached us from Hartlepool. The samples were mostly commendable.

ELECTION RETURNS

Mr. J. Gilliland Creates a New Record

Once again a record has been made by Mr. J. E. Gilliland, the Labour Agent to Mr. J. Lawson, M.P., the winner at Chester-le-Street in filing the return of election expenses. Our files bear record of Mr. Gilliland's achievements in this respect at previous elections, but on the present occasion Mr. Gilliland has surpassed himself. Mr. Gilliland filed his return of election expenses *three days before polling day*.

There is another side to this question, for Mr. Gilliland has been for many months in a poor state of health. Indeed, it is true to say that the recent campaign has been directed from his bedside, for throughout the election period he was confined to bed convalescing from his late illness. The Labour Agent's achievement is therefore all the more remarkable.

Some of the smarter among our readers may raise a point as to whether or no it is legal to make the return of election expenses before an election is over. As a matter of fact, it is not, because the Act definitely lays down that the return must be made within thirty-five days *after* the day on which the candidates are declared elected. This fact is, of course, also known to Mr. Gilliland, who has taken care to repossess himself of the return and re-present same according to law. This course anticipates any smart Johnnie who might like to raise a quibble over the matter.

Anyway, had others been able to have done the same as Mr. Gilliland, the Editor might have been saved a month's hard work just completed!

THE WOODCRAFT FOLK

A YEAR'S REVIEW

A number of outstanding events of 1935 deserve recording. February, our 10th anniversary celebrations throughout the country. Easter, our First National Delegate Conference was held at the Educational Convention of the Co-operative Union. May, we recorded "The Pioneer's" birthday, having lived a precarious life for three years. Then came the international summer camp, a very successful camp organised by the Socialist Education International, a body to which we have since affiliated. Another important event of the year was that of the Labour Party's recognition of the Folk. This was, perhaps, the most important issue of all, although it came at an unfortunate time just before the General Election. And then the Christmas Draw, which has realised about £50.

The greater number and higher standard of Folk pamphlets published this year is also worth noting. And last, but not the least, the youth problem has come to the foreground. This is a very real problem which demands serious attention. It is not solved yet. Whither the Youth of the Folk?

And Now For 1936.

With the recognition of the Labour Party as well as the ever-existing recognition and support of the Co-operative Movement, it should be easily possible to start many more Pioneer groups this year, especially if we can afford to have a paid organiser. But, it seems to us, numbers alone is not the only consideration and in some ways not the most important one. We should be doing a good job if we paused in our tracks and cast up the balance sheet of the last ten years as a guide to future developments. What have we achieved? Wherein lies our successes, and where our failures? These are questions which deserve to be answered. It is worth raising these points here, but this is not the place to debate them.

From a purely organisational point of view the next step which seems to be indicated is to have a paid organiser, and to win the recognition and finan-

cial support of the T.U.C. Then we shall have established working connections with the three great workers' movements of this country. It is very necessary also, that National Folk Council be assured, by some means or other, of a substantial annual income.

At the same time we should strive to make existing groups more efficient (they can never be efficient enough!) and to start new groups on a high standard. For this task it is essential to have well trained leaders. That conclusion indicates another step: Training Centres.

There is at least one more major consideration to bear in mind during the New Year, that is that Folk literature tends to be a little out of date and needs careful overhauling. And it would be helpful, we believe, if a new, unadorned Folk text-book were issued for the help and guidance of headmen and prospective headmen. This might take the form of the correspondence course revised.

The Folk enjoys a specially privileged position, as it is the only workers' child education movement well organised on a national scale, in this country. It can become a really important movement and a force to be reckoned with, providing that it continues to be governed sensibly and with a view to developing along the lines of a workers' child education movement *malgré tout* (as the French Red Falcons say) and not with a view to merely uphold traditions for their own sake.

(From the January "Pioneer"—the Woodcraft Folk Magazine.)

THANK YOU!

Dear Drinkwater,

Congratulations on splendid December number.

S.J.G.

October.

"The special 'L.O.' is grand stuff. Congratulations on your initiative in producing so valuable an issue at the right time."

J.C.

The Most Valuable Offer Ever Made

Everyone who thinks about current affairs needs a book of reference—a book full of facts and figures, information and articles on social, political, industrial, financial and international questions.

“THE PEOPLE’S YEAR BOOK”

FULFILS YOUR REQUIREMENTS

It contains authoritative articles on the New Capitalism, Peace and the Colonial Problem, Marketing Schemes, the Housing Problem, Science, Literature, and the Arts.

Its contributors include—

SIR WALTER CITRINE
G. D. H. COLE
G. WALWORTH

POWYS GREENWOOD
COLIN CLARK
AND OTHERS

*It costs
only . .*

1/-

Buy a Copy from your Local Co-operative Society, or order direct from

The C.W.S. PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT
1 Balloon Street, Manchester 4

1/- in Stiff Paper Covers. 3/- Special Library Edition in Stiff Cloth Covers. Postage 6d. extra.

SOCIALIST YOUTH DAY

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23rd

We are glad to note that it has now been decided to make Socialist Youth Day a regular feature of League of Youth activity. This year Socialist Youth Day will be Sunday, February 23rd.

League of Youth Branches have been circularised from the National Advisory Committee, giving advice on how to make the most of the special day dedicated to them. The circulars sent out include a memorandum of suggested arrangements, two draft letters, a draft resolution and some Speakers' Notes. Branches are also advised to get on sale an extra supply of the "New Nation," and to order copies of the leaflet "Some Straight Questions to the Younger Generation," which is a leaflet peculiarly suited to the day, and obtainable at 7s. per thousand.

We suggest that in any areas not covered by a League of Youth, and where as a consequence the full series of suggestions may not be acted upon, the Local Parties or other organisations in the area, should interest themselves in this matter and take steps to arrange something themselves for Youth Day, if indeed it is impossible to get a Youth Movement going beforehand. Socialist Youth Day in any case ought to be observed in every part of the country, and it is the business of the older Movement equally with that of the younger part of it, to see that this is so.

As the circulars point out, "Socialist Youth Day is a venture for the whole Labour Movement.

"Leagues of Youth should act in association with their Local, Divisional or Borough Party, setting up a *Joint Committee*, to make the arrangements. In divided boroughs, or other districts where a number of Labour Parties and Leagues of Youth can act in association, they should join forces and run a central Rally.

"Every meeting should have Youth Speakers, but the services of M.P.'s, Candidates, Trade Union Officers, and all National Speakers, should be utilised.

"Head Office will try to effect book-

ings of speakers if early notice is given. Applications should give information of probable size of meetings, names of any other speakers booked direct, and an assurance that the speaker's expenses will be met. No guarantee can be given that any particular person can be secured, but the persons available will be allocated so as to get the maximum effect from their services. M.P.'s and other prominent persons will naturally be allocated to the more important meetings.

"The platform drive will be linked up with publicity in National Journals. This national publicity should be supported by as much striking local publicity as possible.

"As far as possible, *personal invitations* to attend the meetings should be issued to all known young people. It should be the immediate business of those concerned with the arrangements to examine Electors' Lists, etc., in order to compile an adequate list of young people to whom these invitations can be sent.

General Arrangements.

"Every demonstration should be made as bright and spectacular as possible. There should be instrumental music and the singing of Socialist songs.

"As far as possible those supporting the speakers on the platform should be young people.

"All the stewards and literature sellers should be young people.

"Those on the platform, and all concerned in the administration of the meeting should wear rosettes in the colours of the Local Party.

"Whilst the general public might be admitted, the main part of the seating should be reserved for young people. Existing young members of the Party should be asked to sit *en masse*."

We have quoted from the instructions sent out fairly liberally, for we feel that the advice given ought to interest all our readers, and we trust that all will co-operate in securing a record day for what, after all, ought to be a momentous event in the life of the nation.

USE YOUR LOUD SPEAKER

BEWARE BENIGHTED BY-LAWS

At the recent General Election Labour was, in respect of the use of portable Loud Speakers, at least as well equipped as its opponents.

The explanation of this event is largely due to the consistent advocacy by the "Labour Organiser" of this new weapon, coupled with the energy of the patentees and vendors themselves. The Tories, of course, had their Film vans, and even in respect of Loud Speakers it can hardly be expected that at the next election Labour can repeat its advantage in numbers.

There is, however, a possible threat to the use of Loud Speakers in the streets to which Labour folk, and particularly Labour representatives on public bodies, should be keenly alive. In this matter vigilance may be the price of liberty.

The use of a Loud Speaker apparatus in public places calls for the exercise of commonsense and moderation, not to say a consideration for the feelings and comfort of the inhabitants. What is one man's meat is another man's poison. What may be entertainment in one area may be keenly resented in another (it is precisely this which Labour folk are apt to ignore or even to challenge), and the unrestricted use of Loud Speakers at any hour of the clock would of course be intolerable. All this reasonable folk will admit.

We have noted more than once a lack of consideration for some of these matters in certain quarters; more particularly have we noted that certain Parties have been tempted to purchase an instrument for street use which carries too much volume for the necessities or for street use at all. Instruments suitable for use in a football field will not be tolerated for long in the streets. Now that Labour has discovered a valuable aid to propaganda in its Loud Speakers, it will be a ghastly pity if want of consideration and commonsense by a minority leads to general restrictions that will deprive Labour speakers and announcers of what, after all, is a physical advantage, beside being a political asset.

Signs are not lacking that there is a desire on the part of some judicial

authorities to restrict the use of Loud Speakers. Control of street criers, the playing of noisy instruments, and even the amplification of radio programmes by means of Loud Speakers, already form the subject of By-laws in certain places.

The line of attack seems to be to apply to Loud Speakers regulations intended to control other noises. There has recently been an urge from a very prominent quarter to prohibit Loud Speakers in the streets altogether, and Labour Councillors must keep their eyes open to ensure that no legislation to this end is included in any private Bills of Parliament promoted by their authorities.

In one screed against Electoral Loud Speakers, an otherwise sober journal actually commits itself to the following expression:

"We should like to see some public-spirited person of means, who did not mind being laughed at to prosecute the operator of a Loud Speaker in a van for an assault by causing sound waves violently to impinge upon his eardrums."

It will be interesting to explain here the effect of a recent prosecution and appeal heard in London.

In this case four Loud Speakers had been fitted to the roof of a motor-van, which was driven along the street, the noise being audible for a distance of two hundred yards, during at least several seconds.

There was no evidence that the noise was a nuisance or annoyance to anyone. However, in London the authorities have behind them the convenient Metropolitan Police Act, 1839, under which a person who in any thoroughfare or public place uses any noisy instrument for calling persons together, or for announcing any show or entertainment, is liable to a penalty of forty shillings. (The sober journal above mentioned says the penalty should be hot oil and the rack!)

The magistrates convicted in the above case, and on appeal their decision was confirmed.

There are one or two nice points con-

nected with this decision which concern London only, or any other place (which is unlikely) which may have a By-law of this kind in force.

In the first place, it should be noted that the offence of obstruction is unnecessary, and so is proof of nuisance. It would appear that the use of the "noisy instrument" would not fall within the above mentioned provision if used for the purpose of announcing anything else, other than a show or entertainment, or for calling persons together. The essence of the offence is to call people together with a noisy instrument and not to be making a noise! In our opinion, a Loud Speaker tour, with music or speech, would not fall within the section, provided the speaker avoided announcing some specific show or meeting.

Apart from the threat of any special regulations or legislation, users of Loud Speaker apparatus must remember that there are other provisions of the law which may trip them up unless proper care is exercised. We have said enough to show that we consider some improvement in the manners of the users of Loud Speakers is necessary. Apart from this we feel that it is desirable that Labour men and women should be alive to any attempt to limit their freedom in the use of Loud Speakers. Offences of obstruction stand of course in a different category and in our view, they should be of greater concern to the law than a mere amplification of the human voice.

One or two readers have asked us about the effect of the following By-law which it appears has been adopted in several towns:

"No person shall in any street or public place or in any shop, business premises or place which adjoins any street or public place and to which the public are admitted, operate or cause or suffer to be operated any wireless loud-speaker or gramophone in such a manner as to cause annoyance to, or disturbance of, occupants or inmates of any premises, or passengers."

Our view of this matter is that the By-law above quoted applies only to wireless loud-speakers, though possibly, it may apply to the amplification of gramophone records. It certainly does not apply to the amplification of the human voice.

In this connection it would appear

LET THE BLACKFRIARS PRESS HELP YOU !

Printers of this Journal.
Let us help you in your
work by producing
your literature in good
and tasteful style at
reasonable prices, and
with quick despatch.
Send us your enquiries.

THE BLACKFRIARS PRESS

Phone 27164

LIMITED

Smith-Dorrien Road, Leicester

BOURNEMOUTH—

**Food Reform
Guest House.**

**Loughtonhurst,
West Cliff
Gardens.**

Get right away
from the Move-
ment and have a
holiday or rest
with us. Revised
terms. Write
Manager.
H. & C. ALL
ROOMS.

that Wantage has an Act which, from the point of view of the trusted old curmudgeons who would inhibit every invention and everything unusual, does everything required of it. By an Act of Parliament passed over one hundred years ago, an invention not even thought of then, may land its users in an appearance before Commissioners (now dead) or the Justices of the Peace, to be fined 40s. for each offence. This precious Act passed in the period of hangings for sheep stealing permits apprehension without warrant. How the carpet-slipped old fogies of Wantage must bless that Act as they curse the Labour Loud Speaker!

THE "RIGHTS" OF "FREE SPEECH"

In our issue for April, 1930, we passed certain comments on the so-called rights of Free Speech. In that article we pointed out, to quote a famous aphorism "there ain't no such thing," and we quoted the judgment of the late Lord Dunedin who said "There is no such thing as a right in the public to hold meetings as such in the streets; streets are for passage, and passage is paramount to everything else. It is quite clear that citizens may meet in the streets, and may stop to speak to each other. The whole thing is a question of degree."

It would appear from a recent judgment that yet another blow has been struck at those who uphold the unrestricted "right" to hold a meeting in the streets.

The facts of the case quoted and heard on appeal some time ago appear to be that with a view to holding a meeting in Nynhead Street, New Cross, S.E., about thirty people collected near to the entrance of an Unemployed Training Centre. At the entrance to the street a notice was written across the roadway which read as follows:—

"Sedition."

**Meeting at the Test Centre To-day
(now), 1 p.m.**

Speakers:

- R. Kidd (Council for Civil Liberties).
- A. Bing (Barrister-at-Law).
- E. Hanley (Amalgamated Engineers' Union).
- K. Duncan (National Unemployed Workers' Movement).

**Defend the Right of Free Speech and
Public Meeting.**

It appears that when a speaker was about to mount the soap-box the Chief Constable of the District stopped the meeting, which he said could not be held in that street, but in another one some 175 yards away. The speaker (Mrs. Katherine Duncan) persisted in addressing those present and was immediately taken into custody for obstructing the police. It may be use-

ful to note that Nynhead Street is a cul-de-sac with houses on one side and the Training Centre on the other. Traffic therefore would presumably be somewhat limited and little obstructed by any meeting. In fact, the police did not allege any obstruction either of the highway or a denial of access to the Training Centre, nor did they suggest that Mrs. Duncan or any of the persons present at the meeting had committed, incited or provoked a breach of the peace.

Prohibition of the meeting arose out of an apprehension that a breach of the peace would ensue, and the prosecution arose out of a charge of obstructing the police, i.e., in enforcing what was claimed to be a lawfully and necessary prohibition. The result of the appeal was a confirmation of the conviction. The evidence of the police showed that a previous meeting which Mrs. Duncan addressed had been held at the same spot and a disturbance had afterwards taken place at the Training Centre, to which the police had been called.

The Lord Chief Justice said: "English law does not recognise any special right of public meetings either for political or any other purpose. The right of assembly . . . is nothing more than a view taken by the Courts of individual liberty of the person and individual liberty of speech. Mr. Justice Humphries said "the sole question raised . . . is whether the respondent, i.e., the police, who was admittedly obstructed was so obstructed when in the execution of his duty . . . It is the duty of a police officer to prevent apprehended breaches of the peace . . . while he was taking steps so to prevent a reasonably apprehended breach of the peace he was wilfully obstructed by the appellant (Mrs. Duncan)."

The above case, while not apparently raising any new point does give legal authority to a view long understood by most of those responsible for public meetings, that if police decisions in these matters are to be fought, they are best not fought by physical force, and a persistence which only lands the offender in the clutches of the law.

THE LIBERAL VOTE

By **SARDIUS HANCOCK**

[Mr. Sardius Hancock writes on the above subject with special authority and an exceptional knowledge of county Liberalism. Mr. Hancock, our readers will also remember, was for some time the Liberal candidate for the Bewdley Division, and fought Mr. Stanley Baldwin. He was the Labour opponent of Mr. Baldwin in 1931.]

Liberals will tell you that Lloyd George killed the Liberal Party in 1918. And there is much truth in the statement. But the process of decay was begun with the great triumph of 1906, and became manifest after the Parliament Act had been passed, and it was discovered that the Party had no more causes for which it was willing to fight.

The victory of 1906 had been won by Radical enthusiasm, but in the allocation of places the Whig and reactionary forces were able to secure a big share of the prizes. The result was that the huge majority accomplished nothing commensurate with its size. The mountain brought forth very small mice. The rich men of the Party saw to it that nothing really dangerous found a place on the Statute Book. The men who had fought to secure the vote for the people were not willing to concede them an adequate wage, were definitely opposed to the claim for maintenance, and looked with complacency, or at least with unconcern, upon a permanent margin of unemployment among the workers.

As a consciousness of these facts took possession of the Radical mind the drift to the Left accelerated, and the Labour Party, a mere band in that Parliament began to grow apace.

That movement continued until it came to threaten the very existence of the Liberal Party. And that in two ways. In the later time a Liberal Whip remarked privately upon the phenomenon: "The worst of it is that as the votes go the Left the money goes to the Right!"

The Stranding of the Liberal Voter.

The Liberal Party in the last ten years of the nineteenth century and the first ten of the twentieth, might have

been divided, roughly, into three sections:—

1. The section composed of wealthy men, opposed to industrial advance.

2. Radicals, not opposed in principle to the claim of "Work or maintenance." Gradually absorbed by Labour.

3. A large middle section, not much impressed by Labour appeals; its main interest the maintenance of the Party's traditional position. Deeply attached to the Party, cherishing the memory of its past glory, and grieved at its present defeat. If these are to be won the approach must be sympathetic and tactful.

How can they be won?

Labour's first task in this matter in the rural areas and the country boroughs is to convince the electorate that not only is Labour fit to govern, but that it is expected to do so in its turn. How may the argument run? Something like this:

In the eighteenth century rural England was divided between the great Whig and Tory landowners. In the nineteenth, after 1832, between their successors, the Liberals and the Conservatives. Party colours were the symbol of that inheritance. The non-party men took it for granted that each would govern in turn. Yet by many of these people to-day the Socialist is looked upon as an outsider. The fitness of the Party is, by Tory speakers, denied. How is that denial to be met?

In the counties Labour speakers should claim the position as by right; since as Whiggism expounded the constitutional principle in the eighteenth century, and as Liberalism fought the battle of the franchise in the nineteenth, the right and duty of championing a new social and economic order is Labour's. Labour is now a great constitutional party, and as such must make good its position. It is possible that this may sound rather superfluous to many members of the Labour Party, but it is not superfluous when spoken to Liberal audiences, or indeed audiences of any sort, in the rural areas.

Nor is it in the least superfluous to insist that the Labour Party is the

YOUR PRINTING

will be dealt with
efficiently at the
Printing Works of

THE CO-OPERATIVE WHOLESALE SOCIETY LIMITED

Send your next order to
your nearest C.W.S. Works.
The C.W.S. Works are
capable of dealing with all
kinds of printed matter for
THE LABOUR PARTY,
LOCAL LABOUR PARTIES
TRADE UNIONS, CO-OP-
ERATIVE & FRIENDLY
SOCIETIES, CLUBS, Etc.

Write to

C.W.S. PRINTING WORKS

HAMILTON ROAD, LONGSIGHT	-	MANCHESTER
GREG STREET, SOUTH REDDISH	-	STOCKPORT
WARRINGTON	-	LANCASHIRE
CRANBOURNE STREET	-	LEICESTER
PELAW	-	COUNTY DURHAM

British Labour Party—really a most important point in our Southern counties. Its policy—it should be insisted—has been developed to meet the needs of the British people. This is not to deny an immense indebtedness to teachers from other lands, but it is to assert that the Party is what it is because of the needs of our own folk, and because it is possessed by a deep and passionate love for its own country; and that its peculiar qualities are the direct result of its atmosphere and environment.

The Nonconformist Vote.

The majority of Free Churchmen in the South and West of England are Liberals. This fact is intimately related to the problem of winning both the boroughs and the rural divisions. An illustration may not be out of place. Some years ago a Liberal politician received a wire from headquarters asking if he would contest a division at short notice. The only information given was that there was a large number of Primitive Methodist chapels in the division. He accepted and won the seat after a campaign of a few weeks. Which suggests that it is vitally necessary to secure the support of the Nonconformists if the rural areas are to be won. Where there is a chapel in a village it is commonly supported by at least two or three families of superior intelligence, who are the natural leaders in progressive causes.

And just because these men and women, whether in town or country are possessed of superior intelligence there adhesion is only to be secured on well-understood grounds, and a difficulty of serious magnitude lies in the path to such an understanding. It is that Free Churchmen view with steady disfavour the use of Sunday for propaganda purposes. It is true that many Free Churchmen support the Labour Party, but so far as the great body is concerned the difficulty and the objection remain. Ministers state this in definite terms. And even where Free Churchmen give their support there is apt to be something lacking—there is not that wholehearted and passionate devotion that enabled Gladstone to carry the country triumphantly with him.

This objection cannot be ignored if it is desired to secure the Liberal vote

in the Free Churches, and it might be wise to encourage Divisional and Local Parties to make a favourable pronouncement on the question. And it seems clear that if Sunday propaganda likely to follow:—

1. A large portion of the Liberal vote will pass, silently perhaps, but certainly, to the Tories.

2. Even where this does not happen Labour will suffer, since the matter has a practical aspect. Free Church men are occupied with religious work on Sunday and will not attend meetings or conferences, hence although the vote may be given the influence will be lacking.

I may, perhaps, be allowed to add that I have a pretty intimate acquaintance with Nonconformity in several counties; and as an ex-president of my own Free Church Council, and president-elect for 1936, I am able to speak with some degree of certitude.

If this undertaking could be frankly given and as loyally observed, it would mean, ultimately, the adhesion of millions of votes to the Labour cause; and of that which is sometimes of more importance than the mere vote of that moral enthusiasm which is needed to carry a great cause to victory.

There is something to be said and something to be understood on both sides. Liberalism missed its way at the end of the nineteenth century. It lost touch with the workers who had made it strong. It is true there are some—perhaps on both sides—who would like to keep the two apart, but that is surely a counsel of unwisdom. Liberals know that the heart of Liberalism can never find rest in the Tory camp. This does not, of course, mean that there can be a working arrangement between the two Parties. The vital issue of to-day is the passage from Capitalism to Socialism, and if Liberalism is not to perish it must face up to the realities of the age.

This, then, is the position. Apart the two forces may still accomplish much—united they would be irresistible. But while they remain disunited Toryism contrives to mar our national life and endanger the peace of the world.

(To be concluded next month)

NOBODY KNOWS—

THE LAW OF LOTTERIES

Those of our readers who have been exercising their ingenuity in devising competitions which are outside the scope of the Betting and Lotteries Act, 1934, need to take cognisance of the case of *Coles v. Odhams Press, Ltd., and Another*, which was recently heard on appeal in the High Court.

In this case it appeared that *"The People"* published the offer of a prize of £2,000 and other prizes for the correct solution of a Cross Word puzzle. In the case of some of the missing words there were alternatives. The correct solution was pre-selected, and apparently what competitors were expected to do was to send an attempt which corresponded with the pre-selected solution.

It was contended on behalf of *"The People"* that the matter was not pure guess work, and that, by the exercise of reasoning powers and skill, competitors could arrive, or at any rate ought to arrive, at the correct solution, and that hence the competition was a game of skill and not of chance.

The magistrates concurred with this view, and dismissed the case. On appeal to the High Court the Lord Chief Justice reversed the decision and the case was remitted to the magistrates for a conviction.

The Lord Chief Justice said: "I see the word 'lottery' written all over this scheme." Mr. Justice Humphries pointed out that the attempts of competitors could not be judged on their merits, because the editor had already adopted his own solution beforehand.

The importance of the above decision lies in the fact that it seems to reverse a tendency of the Courts to hold as legal any scheme in which the element of skill appeared, notwithstanding that some element of chance also entered into the matter. The decision appears to tighten up the view which the Courts will take in these matters, though the whole matter is in such a state of delightful uncertainty that it is not safe even to be too positive about these interpretations.

The High Court apparently found

that in the case before them it was all chance and no skill.

Reviewing this case a legal authority says "almost one is tempted to say that the result of a prosecution is itself something of a lottery." And so it would appear.

Since the above was written yet another case, apparently contradicting the above decision, has been heard in the Courts. The case will be reported next month; it is probable, however, that one or both cases will go to the House of Lords for final decision.

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor.

Labour Education

Sir,—As your readers are no doubt aware, the National Council of Labour Colleges is the only large Labour educational organisation in the country, and precisely because it is a Labour organisation it gets no subsidies from either State or University.

Nearly all of those who read *"The Labour Organiser"* are active as officials in the Labour Movement; and I should therefore like to take this opportunity of pointing out that they could give very considerable assistance to that Movement if they would draw the attention of their members to the desirability of attending N.C.L.C. classes. Many Trade Unions and other working-class organisations provide free access to our classes through their national educational schemes, and in many of these cases, postal courses on 17 different subjects, ranging from Chairmanship to Economics, are provided free.

I shall be glad to send particulars to anyone who cares to write me.

Yours faithfully,

J. P. M. MILLAR,

General Secretary, National Council of Labour Colleges

15, South Hill Park Gardens,
London, N.W.3.

30th December, 1935.

THE "L.O." COLLECTORS' BOOKS ARE IDEAL

FOR COLLECTING MEMBERS'
SUBSCRIPTIONS

FOR ALL WEEKLY or MONTHLY
PARTY COLLECTIONS

NOW VERY URGENT

The "Labour Organiser" supplies just what you want. Moderate price, stiff-covered, with full instructions to Collectors. 32 leaves to a book; spaces for names and addresses and 52 weeks' contributions; page for Treasurer's acknowledgments.

FOR
CASH
WITH
ORDER
ONLY

Send 2d. to the Editor for Specimen Book

WE DO NOT
GIVE CREDIT

12 Books 2/- 24 Books 3/8 36 Books 5/6
50 „ 7/6 100 „ 14/9 200 „ 27/6

ORDERS AND CASH TO :

H. DRINKWATER, Fernhill Heath, Nr. Worcester

or

Publishing Office, "LABOUR ORGANISER," 107 Dale End, Birmingham, 4

CHILDREN

• • AS NUMBER-TAKERS

Our experience of election returns arising out of the recent General Election convinces us that the practice of employing children as number-takers, if it is dying at all, is dying very slowly. To our personal knowledge the method of returning the payments in this direction caused embarrassment to quite a number of election agents.

We want to again express our strong disapproval of the employment of children in any capacity at all at an election, and in particular of their employment in the irksome and often exposed work of number-taking. The argument one hears that the children like the work, is no different from that put forward by farmers in agricultural districts who urge that the employment of children on the land at a tender age is good for their health.

Quite frankly, we are surprised that Labour people can be found to defend a practice which was inherited from the Liberal and Tory Parties. It may be true that some children like the work, but how many more are put to it for economic reasons or put to it because the children's parents are of our persuasion? If we desire to attract the children to the Labour Movement, putting them to the task of waiting outside the Polling Stations to pester voters for their numbers, is about the last way of creating a permanent interest in, or understanding of, the workings or policy of our Party.

Often when we have expressed our view on this matter to the locals concerned, we have been met with the statement that "it always has been done here"; that this brilliant excuse should be put forward by a Party that stands for revolutionary change is simply amazing.

Another excuse has been that it is impossible to find sufficient adults to do the work. We could answer this by saying that we believe the children very often could do the Committee Room work better than it is done, and it might do good to those enjoying the comfort of the Committee

Room if they exchanged lots with the children!

We have no sort of sympathy with the excuse that sufficient adults cannot be got, and therefore children must be employed. The adults can be got for payment if they cannot be got voluntarily; if, then, it is urged that this cannot be done because there is not sufficient money, it becomes clear that the children are employed because they are cheaper!

In our opinion a definite stand ought to be taken against the practice which we are now condemning. It ought not to be possible to say that any Labour candidate is willing to endeavour to secure the future of the children at the price of their contemporary enslavement, yet this is what the employment of children of tender age at election times really means. The matter is made worse when it is said that the children are only given a shilling or so as an "encouragement."

The activities of children in any sort of election work needs to be carefully watched. We have seen weary little fingers addressing envelopes at unearthly hours of the night. This sort of thing won't do, and we do not believe that it really happens because it is the child's free will desire to so serve. The politics of the adults should not be the excuse for embroiling those whose lives should be mainly spent in happy exercise, sleep and learning.

There really is no satisfactory solution of the child's genuine desire to help, but at least we can avoid the pitfall of exploiting it.

It is with profound regret that we learn, while in the press, of the death of Frank Organ, late agent at Deptford, which took place on 14th inst. The sympathies of ourselves and readers are extended to the bereaved.

BILL-POSTING STATIONS.

Why Not Labour-Owned Stations?

Again and again for the last fifteen years the "Labour Organiser" has urged upon its readers the desirability of gradually extending the number of Billposting Stations owned by Local Labour Parties. The result is practically nil, and we are afraid, as we confess elsewhere in this issue, that Labour folk do not readily value the opportunities for advertisement.

Had our advice been followed some thousands of "stations" might now be in use throughout the country, even if the majority of them were only small hoardings in supporters' gardens, capable of accommodating a double or quad crown bill.

When the Labour Party commenced the publication of its Wayside Messages, we looked forward to the rapid multiplication of small boards, but we have been disappointed. Yet, after all, for the cost of a few coppers, quite decent notice boards can be knocked together by any amateur. We ourselves confess to making and erecting two such notice boards on one Sunday morning during the General Election!

The point we wish to draw attention to is that the opportunity of putting up notice boards may get beautifully less with the general adoption of Section 47 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1932. The section referred to has not yet been generally adopted, but its adoption is proceeding apace, and that means that the acreage of land "protected in respect of advertising" is rapidly increasing. Labour does not want to wake up some day to find that existing hoardings are a protected industry, vested in its opponents, and with nothing before it but to pay through the nose for every inch of space wanted.

We do wish that Labour Parties would pay serious attention to the opportunities they already possess for displaying advertisements. There is both publicity and money in the matter. At the same time we hope that Labour Parties having opportunities for opening stations will take care that Labour hoardings will not be such as to offend the amenities, or call down the commendable attention of the Scapa Society.

A FIGHTER TELLS ANOTHER STORY.

By G. W. BYWATER.

On two previous occasions I have described in our valuable "L.O.," how all the resources of squirearchy, privileged plutocrats and a prejudiced parson combined their efforts successfully to prevent the writer from winning a seat on the local R.D.C.

Scarcely had their rejoicing subsided when a casual vacancy was declared in a neighbouring parish. Here there was a remote possibility of a Labour victory if a vigorous campaign was waged in the intervening period between nomination and polling day by a personal canvass, public meeting and a detailed election address.

This work would have been easy, because the register showed less than 150 Local Government electors. In consultation with our Divisional Agent (Mr. S. J. Gee) we decided to adopt tactics,—that proved successful.

We agreed to keep my candidature secret until the very last hours before the close of nominations, because we believed there was just that possibility of a walk-over in this particular parish. On the other hand if our Tory opponents got hold of the flimsiest hint that I was after the seat, that would have set them on the war-path with a Mussolinian vigour. Now, it is an open secret they are kicking themselves for their slackness in not giving me a fight.

Of course the local Tory paper does not like it; its only reference to the result is a remark that I "slipped in" and managed to "snatch a seat." It sounds like doing a job of crib-cracking, when Labour gets a seat. Well, well, they will shortly realise that this unwelcome intruder does not go about his business in *silence*. This result goes to prove, with the aid of an experienced Rural Agent, many seats can be won for Socialism, if candidates can be found.

We understand that the Bristol East Divisional Labour Party (who are to be congratulated upon a great fight and wonderful victory) now possess a Loud Speaker equipment attached to a small Singer van. The Party is prepared to hire it out at reasonable cost at By-elections. Applications should be sent to Councillor H. E. Rogers, Labour Agent, 326a, Church Road, St. George, Bristol.